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ABSTRACT

Most political scientists argue that the term "public policy" encompasses both the actions of government and the intentions that determine those actions. This paper presents an overview of theories about the sources of impetus for policy changes, reviews public policy formation about school choice at the national level and in California, and discusses the role of the initiative process in shaping California educational policy. It introduces the concept of "public entrepreneur" in the educational market place and describes the formation of an action coalition in California. The school-choice initiative, Proposition 174, was defeated in the November 1993 California elections. In response to concerns raised by the failed initiative, the superintendent of San Bernardino County formed a Community Coalition task force to develop school-improvement projects. Proposition 174 focused the attention of public administrators and elected officials on their constituents' concerns, created a broad-based coalition, and facilitated the evaluation and improvement of projects begun in response to issues raised by the campaign. (Contains 50 references.) (LMI)

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Educational Policy Reform as a Result of a Failed Political Initiative

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A. Public Policy

"Policy, like politics, is complex, invisible, and elusive" (Palumbo, 1994).

I. Public Policy

Political scientists have debated the definition of public policy at least since Locke proffered his definition in his *Treatise On Government*. However, most scholars argue that the term public policy encompasses both the actions of government and the intentions that determine those actions (Palumbo, 1994). Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan (1970:) define policy as a "projected program of goals, values and practices" whereas Friedrich (1963) argues that the concept of policy must have a goal, objective or purpose.

And, included in any attempt to define "public policy" must also be whatever results are obtained by intentional governmental inaction. Eulau and Prewitt (1973) view government and governing as a complex process where inaction can have as impressive an impact on society as a determined action. These definitions require that a goal or purpose must exist. But, political scientists note that it is sometimes difficult to discern what the goal of an action might be, or if there ever was one. Thomas Dye argues that his earlier definition bypasses all of these problems by stating simply that, "Public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do" (Dye, 1995:).

II. Sources of Impetus for Policy Change

The impetus for the creation of a new policy or for changing an existing policy can come from innumerable sources in the political, economic, or social arena. Political scientists have identified the pre-policy step or first step in the overall policy process as the time when interests coalesce and move toward the definition of the problem, organizing their efforts to demand a governmental response. Political scientists agree that problem identification is the first step in the development of policy and offer several models to help us distinguish between the different interests that participate in problem identification (Cobb and Elder, 1984: Lipsky, 1980).

All of the models simplify the policy process and help pinpoint the perpetrators of

policy change. The broadest models, systems analysis and the institutional model, attempt to determine the relationship between structures and the content of policy. These models look at the structures, their own agendas (demands to move on the bigger public policy agenda), and the impact the structures can have on the formulation of a governmental response (Dye, 1995). These two models are best used to study the interrelationship of structures at different levels of government or the impact of the greater environment of the political system on the policy process.

The elite model suggests that researchers should look at policy as the result of elite preferences. Insiders have values, demands, and interests that they bring to the process of decision-making that may or may not be the same as the interests of the public. However, these elites can initiate a policy input from within the ranks of government, using their proximity to the policy decision-makers to their own advantage (Dye and Ziegler, 1993).

The group model argues that groups of individuals with like interests organize to press their demands upon government. For group theorists, public policy is ". . . the equilibrium reached in the group struggle at any given moment . . ." (Latham, 1956). Policy makers, especially elected officials, are seen as constantly reacting to group preferences and demands. Groups come in all sizes, shapes and interests and the delicate balance that results from their competition in the policy arena keeps the political process stable (Truman, 1951).

Public choice theory sees public policy as the result of self-interested individuals pursuing the maximization of their own personal gain. While seeking to maximize their own individual benefits, people decide to act collectively because they can enhance their own situation by doing so (Buchanan, 1962).

Using the economic theory of behavior in the marketplace, public choice theory opposes the notion of unselfish political actors attempting to move policy for the benefit of society. Politicians act to maximize their chances of re-election; parties develop policy positions to win the greatest number of votes for their candidates. Groups are formed by self-seeking individuals who realize that the attainment of their personal goal is best

served by organizing others with similar goals to pressure government to act.

These models suggest that the impetus for political change can come from: (1) the structures of government itself, (2) the insiders or elites who are in close proximity to the decision-makers in government, (3) the groups that form around interests and issues that prompt them to pressure government for action, or (4) self-interested individuals who seek to maximize their own personal benefits by seeking out political change.

B. Public Policy and School Choice

The philosophical foundations of choice and the concept of consumer sovereignty constitute the fabric of United States history. Because of this, they are imbedded in the philosophy of education as well as that of the marketplace. These fundamental beliefs antedate the current policy controversies by over two hundred years. They constituted one the strongest desires of early settlers to this country--the freedom to choose the religion, the lifestyle, and the education they deemed proper for themselves and their children.

I. School Choice Policy Formation at a National Level

It has been argued since the early 18th century by such esteemed philosophers as Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill and Thomas Paine that the most efficient and fairest method of funding education was that of providing parents with tuition money and permitting them to choose the schools most suited to their children. Today, the idea is once again being considered actively in the states.

Such ideas were not popular during the 19th and early 20th centuries in the United States. Instead, the concept of free public tax-supported schooling prevailed. However, the court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954, 1955) began to change the way in which funding for public education would be handled by focusing attention on the issue of equity. One of the first proposals came from the Nobel Prize winning economist, Milton Friedman who, in 1955, began promoting the idea of highly deregulated tuition vouchers.

Since then his idea, though highly controversial, has been gaining in popularity.

Friedman proposed voucher plans as a means of bringing excellence, efficiency and responsiveness to lower education. He proposed that parents be given vouchers redeemable for a specific maximum sum per child per year. Such vouchers were to be used only at "approved" institutions which met certain government standards. Private schools would be free to pick and choose among students using any criteria meaningful to them such as religion, ideology or academic ability. Wealthier parents could apply the voucher toward tuition at private schools, but poorer parents would not receive supplemental funding so their children could attend the more expensive schools (Friedman, 1962).

Christopher Jencks proposed a different voucher school choice plan during the 1960s. His idea was to provide federally funded vouchers geared toward helping low-income students. Under his plan wealthy parents would not be allowed to add personal funds to the vouchers, but supplemental funds would be available to poor children so that they might attend the more prestigious schools. Jencks's plan required all private schools to meet state and local requirements. It eliminated schools with certain philosophical or political orientations. Additionally, free transportation would be furnished, detailed information would be provided to parents about school information, teacher qualifications, educational programs and test scores, and oversubscribed schools would have to conduct a lottery for half of their students (Jencks, 1972).

The 1964 Civil Rights Act, containing Section 601, prohibited federal funding for activities marred by racial discrimination. In doing so, it removed one of the main historical impediments to massive federal aid to education. Liberal northern members of Congress had been reluctant to vote for large federal aid bills unless such funds were to be used as incentives to desegregate dual school systems existing in the South. Similarly, southern members of Congress refused to support legislation containing such restrictive provisions. For over one hundred years, this conflict had brought large federal school aid bills to a standstill. By removing this impediment, the Civil Rights Act cleared the way for the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the federal government's largest educational

initiative (Guthrie, 1968). In addition, it authorized a massive social science effort to assess the equality of educational opportunity.

The final report of this assessment effort, which came to be known as the "Coleman Report" (1966) after sociologist James S. Coleman who headed the study, documented the achievement gap between black and white students. Released in 1966, it reported two controversial findings. The first was that the gap was not found in conjunction with an inequality of resources within regions of the United states. The second was that school variables showed little positive correlation to student achievement once student social background factors were controlled. In other words, the existing educational system was having little impact upon student outcome. The immediate reaction among certain groups of researchers was an implication that the data-gathering and analytic techniques of the report were so flawed as to discount the policy utility of its conclusions--an implication they could never quite establish.

By the early 1970s, a plan supported by the National Institute of Education and the Office of Economic Opportunity to launch federally funded voucher demonstration programs based upon the Jencks plan produced only one school district willing and able to participate in the experiment--Alum Rock, California. Even here, union opposition prevented the inclusion of private schools into the experiment and protected the jobs of those teachers unable to attract students to their classrooms. This experiment, documented carefully by the Rand Corporation (1973), demonstrated that many poorly educated, low-income parents choose schools based on convenience and location, rather than on quality of educational programming. Even those parents who were enthusiastic in the beginning lost interest during the fourth and fifth years of the experiment when the program failed to produce higher gains for their children as originally predicted (Levinson, 1976).

Despite differences in the Friedman and Jencks plans and because of the extensive debate over the real implications of the Coleman report, the flame of debate over the structure and funding of American education intensified. Proposals for federal income tax credits for private school parents have been brought before the Congress many times.

They were passed by the Senate in 1969, 1970, 1971, 1976, 1977, and 1978, but never by the House of Representatives. In 1978 the House finally approved the Packwood-Moynihan bill, but only after it was restructured to eliminate funding to elementary and secondary schools (Catterall, 1982).

In 1982, 1983, and 1984, further attempts to expand the scope of tuition tax credits by means of legislation were defeated in Congress. The idea that parents of children who attend private schools should receive support from the government, by means of a voucher, tax credit, or tax deduction, became an issue addressed by state and federal governments, private citizen groups, the educational establishment, and students across the nation.

As a result of the startling 1983 report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, national attention became sharply focused upon the perceived shortcomings of education. Even such recognized scholars as Mortimer Adler (1982), John Goodlad, and Theodore Sizer (1984) declared that public education had serious problems. During this first wave of concern over inadequate schooling, forty-five states raised their graduation requirements (Carnegie, 1992). Higher standards and accountability were looked to as possible solutions. In 1986, a report of the National Governors' Association, *Time for Results*, proposed school choice as a solution to the problems. In doing so, it gave major national bipartisan political support to school choice.

That same year, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy issued the publication, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty-First Century*, which called for the restructuring of schools, the professionalization of teaching and the empowerment of parents and students. Following this proposed idea of restructuring and empowerment, many school districts across the country began to decentralize their decision-making activities. The most dramatic restructuring occurred in 1988 when the Chicago Reform Act created local school site councils at 542 public schools and shifted decision-making powers to them.

In 1989, the President of the United States held a workshop on educational choice at which President Reagan and President-elect Bush endorsed public school choice and

school-based management. Supporters of school choice proposed that the very structure of public education, the public school monopoly, needed reformation. Competition from the private sector was offered as the solution for the problems and inertia within public schools.

The publication of *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* by John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe in 1990 brought more national attention to focus on many of these issues. They attempted to prove that "market driven" schools had an advantage over "democratically controlled" schools because they were better organized. Even though the school organization variable which they constructed is questioned by many authorities, they were the first researchers from respected institutions (Brookings Institution and Stanford University) to present detailed statistical analyses in support of vouchers.

Before their data could be reanalyzed, voucher proponents rallied. President Bush, in 1991, became an advocate as reflected in the policy shift when he and Lamar Alexander, the Secretary of Education, released their educational reform plan, "America 2000." The plan called for a system of national standards, privately funded "break the mold" schools, and federal grants to states willing to experiment with the private school choice programs. Dramatic in intent and scope, the plan failed to get necessary funding. Congress formulated its own educational reform agenda, containing limited mention of school choice, which was known as the "Neighborhood Schools Improvement Act." The Senate introduced its own version of school reform as S.2. This bill eliminated funding of any type for school choice (Congressional Digest, 1991). Eventually, both houses of Congress left private school choice out of their education reform bills in 1992. By the end of the 102nd Congress, the congressional education reform bill which omitted funding for private school choice plans died in the Senate after passing in the House.

The voucher issues have continued to have their proponents in states such as Wisconsin, Colorado and California. As attention remains riveted upon finding solutions for perceived educational ills, a growing number of business people, politicians, and parents have become concerned enough over the education of the nation's students that they are willing to expend considerable time, energy and money in attempts to alter the

existing system. Supporters of public education have found themselves needing to address the perceived problem and find viable solutions.

II. School Choice Policy Formation in the State of California

A. History of the Political Struggles

At the national level, the decision of Brown v. Board of Education (1954) had begun the focus on the problem of unequal educational opportunity. Interestingly, the issues of school choice and equality of educational opportunity became linked initially in California in 1968. A southern California resident, John Serrano, in conjunction with the legal theories (fiscal neutrality) of Coons, Clune and Sugarman, filed a case against the state treasurer, Ivy Baker Priest, the state controller, and chief state school officer in an attempt to obtain better public school services for his son, Anthony. There were several trial court opinions and two major supreme court decisions which came to be known as Serrano I and Serrano II. These decisions, based upon a pluralistic democratic viewpoint, obligated the state to provide resources and services in an equitable manner to all of the students of California. The public, or collective, good was deemed to be of more importance than the individual interest of the student or the parents. As a result, assembly Bill 65 was enacted which limited statewide school per pupil funding to no more than a $100. discrepancy band.

The five-year experiment at the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District in San Jose was begun in 1972. This project, which eventually cost $7 million in federal funding, failed to enlist the participation of private and parochial schools. Therefore, it became an experiment among public schools within the district. Only fourteen of the twenty-four elementary and middle schools participated in the experimental voucher plan. Parents received vouchers valued at $680 for elementary and $970 for middle school. Students identified as low-income received an addition $275. per voucher. Bus transportation was provided free of charge to all of the schools that participated. Final results indicated: (1) very limited innovations in teaching methodology, (2) little or no gains in achievement scores of students, (3) limited interest in choosing other than neighborhood schools

(Wornsop, 1991). In addition, despite extensive efforts to engage the low-income parents in choosing, the middle-class parents were always better informed about the educational options available for their students. The failure of this pilot program to produce positive results reinforced the arguments of those who warned that mobility alone would not bring about educational improvement (Selden, 1972).

B. The Role of the Initiative Process

The Constitution of the United States attempts to make legislators respond to their constituencies through regular and periodic elections. However, elected representatives have choices. They may choose to promote policies that their constituents would promote if they were in the identical situation. They may choose to promote policies they perceive to be in the best interests of the citizens, whether they would choose to personally pursue such policies on their own. Or, they may choose to do nothing about a particular issue, and retain the status quo. In many states, the only available citizen response is to elect another representative. In other states, the initiative process is available.

California is one of twenty-three direct-democracy states that provides for the initiative process at statewide level. Through this process, citizens may propose and vote on matters of public policy. They are able to directly enact policies by proposing and passing initiatives they prefer without legislative action. Or, they may be able to indirectly influence policy formation by altering the manner in which their elected representatives deal with issues. Legislators are aware that policy advocates may either propose policy in reaction to legislation they do not like, or propose policy as a result of legislative inaction to an agenda. Initiatives may neither be amended nor repealed by the Legislature unless so stipulated within the text of the proposition. Only a simple majority is required for passage of an initiative. If passed, the initiative becomes law the day after the election (Eu, 1993b).

In 1978, two civil rights attorneys who had inspired the Serrano cases on equality of school funding, John E. Coons and Stephen D. Sugarman, spelled out their philosophies in *Education by Choice: The Case for Family Control*. They proposed a

constitutional amendment which would give parents vouchers equivalent to 90 percent of the statewide per pupil cost Their initiative required non-discriminatory admissions policies for religion and race, but not gender, as well as pupil transportation costs and information services to aid parents in selecting schools. The amendment would have allowed the state to increase voucher aid for handicapped and bilingual students as well as compensating for differences in local costs and funding. A lottery system was proposed for cases in which schools had more applicants than spaces. It did not ask for increased regulation of private schools. As the regulations contained in the initiative were revised over twenty times in an effort to safeguard against abuse and discrimination, the initiative became too complicated. Coons and Sugarman were unable to convince California voters of the viability of their plan and the initiative failed to obtain the half million signatures required to qualify for the California ballot (Foote, 1979; 1984).

Meanwhile, conservative forces were also at work to counteract the rapid increase in California's property taxes. On June 6, 1978, the California voters enacted Proposition 13 which limited property taxation. This withdrew approximately $7 billion dollars of projected local property tax revenues from the public sector. Senate Bill 154 which contained another school finance distribution formula was used to "bail out" local governments and school districts. By 1979, the legislature was paying more than 80 cents out of every school support dollar. Senate Bill 154 was a one year statute. It was replaced by Assembly Bill 8 in 1979, which was California's fifth school finance plan in ten years. This reform had occurred simultaneously with other school reforms such as aid to handicapped children, collective bargaining for teachers, and a push for bilingual education. In reaction to these conflicts, as well as the possibility of a Coons and Sugarman voucher initiative, the legislature enacted a moratorium on major school legislation in 1979 (Guthrie, 1980). The drain upon the state in order to fund the education budget began to cause stress within the state bureaucratic systems.

As the interest in school choice gained momentum across the states, legislators in California responded by inaction. As a result, a group of concerned citizens collected enough signatures in 1993 to qualify the school voucher initiative, known as Proposition

174, for a place on the ballot. Because it was based upon the free-market ideas of Friedman, the economist, it contained a different viewpoint of equality than the Coons and Sugarman initiative. This proposition would have greatly altered the manner in which schools for the education of the state's youth (grades K-12) would be funded. It redefined the schooling entity to include private educational institutions (including religious schools) and provided for a voucher payment which would be made directly to the school chosen by the student and his/her family. The proposition failed in an off-year election by an approximate 70/30 majority.

However, the threat of the initiative caused elected officials in Sacramento to react. They enacted legislation permitting both intradistrict transfers and interdistrict transfers of public school students, so that they might attend whatever schools in the state they felt were most appropriate for them. In addition, charter school legislation was passed which permits the formation of more independent schools which are allowed to step outside the rules and regulations of the current state education code.

The threat of the passage of Proposition 174 also prompted the formation of a statewide coalition of educational groups: the California School Boards Association, the California Teachers Association, the Association of California School Administrators, the California Federation of Teachers, the California School Employees Association, State Council of Service Employees and the California State Parent/Teacher Association. Representatives of these various associations organized a new group, the Committee to Educate Against Vouchers (CEAV) (Murdock, et al, 1992). This committee was instrumental in organizing citizens at the state, county, city and local level against the voucher initiative.

In San Bernardino County, there was active participation by representatives from these groups aimed at the defeat of Proposition 174. There was general concern, because 31,338 of the valid signatures necessary to place the initiative on the ballot had been obtained from residents of this particular county. The final county election results showed that over twice as many county voters (63,437) actually voted in favor of the initiative than had signed it originally. Even though the initiative was soundly defeated by

a margin of 34.4% "Yes" votes and 65.6% "No" votes at the county level, the percentages reflected higher interest within the county for school choice than the state averages of 30.3% for and 69.7% against.

The coalition of forces that had joined together to fight the battle against Proposition 174 began to disperse after the November 1993 election. Many of the educational administrators were still unsettled by the negativity and intenseness of the campaign that had passed. The County Superintendent of Public Schools, Dr. Barry Pulliam, specifically felt that Proposition 174 should be viewed as symptomatic of a concern, if not a discontent, of the voting populace with education. Responding as a public entrepreneur, he felt a need to respond to that while the campaign was still fresh in everyone's mind (Pelini, 1995). As a result, many of these same people were encouraged to join a new coalition, The San Bernardino Community Coalition, in an ongoing effort to improve the county's schools.

C. A Public Entrepreneur in the Educational Marketplace

"Clearly entrepreneurial profit-seeking activity is a game worth winning, although in retrospect it frequently is a game not worth playing" [(Pasour, 1989: 104).

I. **The Entrepreneur**

Joseph Schumpeter (1939:102) stated that innovation was the destiny of the entrepreneur. He argued that the "creative destruction" brought about by entrepreneurial activity was the mainstay of a capitalistic society (Schumpeter, 1943; Shackle, 1972). This creative destruction is initiated by the entrepreneur as the market reaches a point of equilibrium. The successful entrepreneur seeks to take apart market elements and reassemble them into a new market that is more beneficial to him. As this market approaches equilibrium, other entrepreneurs engage in similar activities.

Scholars have expanded the concept of entrepreneurship to include innovation in the realm of ideas (Polsby, 1984; Roberts, 1991). Kirzner (1985) states that recent economic literature has focused on the methods by which alert individuals discover market

opportunities. Taking the opposite viewpoint from Schumpeter, Kirzner's entrepreneur discovers disequilibrium in the marketplace. He interjects new ideas that bring the market toward equilibrium. In the act of this "creative discovery," individuals attempt to earn profits by means of newly created or newly discovered possibilities (Casson, 1982; Rickets, 1987).

II. Public Sector Entrepreneurs: Political and Policy

Existing literature does not distinguish clearly between political entrepreneurs, policy entrepreneurs, and interest group lobbyists. It describes two classes of public sectors actors. The first are the political entrepreneurs who are elected to office, such as mayors and city council representatives. Next, are the managerial entrepreneurs who head up established agencies and control their resources, such as city managers or public bureaucracy managers.

Public entrepreneurs are rational actors who weigh the costs and benefits of their actions. They are involved in complex social networks that enable them to recognize opportunities. These networks also help them develop and implement strategies for goal attainment. They pursue innovation when they perceive the ratio of benefits to costs to be in their favor. Private entrepreneurs are seen as being motivated by potential profits--monetary rewards. Public entrepreneurs are motivated by political rewards, such as power, prestige, and the ability to formulate policy. Entrepreneurs have talents which could be invested in alternate areas of activity. The superintendent who is the key player involved in this study, has pursued professions both in the private and public sectors during various time frames. Such entrepreneurs enter the public sector when the potential rewards (such as job satisfaction) are higher than in the private sector.

However, when institutional constraints, such as entry barriers, raise the costs of such efforts, entrepreneurs will remain in the private sector. This rate of entry at which they are attracted is a function of the estimated costs to enter the public arena and the anticipated benefits expected to accrue as a result of being successful. The costs are a compilation of the collective action problems which occur and the ease with which they are

resolved. The benefits are a function of slack resources which exist within the designated community. (PE p.12; 214-215)

Policy entrepreneurs have been mentioned extensively in previous political science literature. Although empirical research on policy entrepreneurs is minimal, scholars suggest that they are highly instrumental in bringing about dynamic rather than incremental changes in the public policy arena (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Smith, 1991; Weissert, 1991). When they have been the focus of researchers, it has been for their policy successes. They are perceived by some as simply being in the right place at the right time (McGraw, 1984). Others have suggested that policy entrepreneurs do not appear simply by chance (Kingdon, 1984; Cobb and Elder; 1983).

Roberts (1991) and King (1988) define policy entrepreneurs as those policy advocates who hold unelected positions in government. Roberts defines bureaucratic entrepreneurs as those in leadership positions and political entrepreneurs as elected officials. The policy entrepreneur in this study would be classified as both a political [elected] entrepreneur as well as a bureaucratic [leadership] entrepreneur who heads a county wide bureaucracy designed to serve and supplement local county superintendents. And there is much evidence to support the fact that he is a strong lobbyist for the special interest of educational advancement. King (1988; 441), who has done the most extensive research on policy entrepreneurs, defines them as follows:

> Policy entrepreneurs seek the adoption of innovative public policy. They perform a range of activities which include: creative/intellectual activities, strategy-making activities, mobilization activities, and guardianship activities to protect the intellectual coherence of their ideas. As a result, policy entrepreneurs are catalysts in the policy innovation process, prompting bureaucratized systems to change and be more responsive, innovative and improve their performance.

King (1988; 55) who employs the case study approach to the study of policy entrepreneurs states, "Few studies, if any, exist of policy entrepreneurs affecting state-level policy making. . . . Studies such as this are needed to determine the impact of policy entrepreneurs at this level of analysis." The policy entrepreneur identified in this study has affected changes in the state budget as well as current and pending statewide legislation

concerning county school districts funding. (Pullium, 1995). King also commented upon the importance of team work and networking to these policy entrepreneurs. Our policy entrepreneur is the president-elect of the state's County Superintendents Association. He networks through meetings, telephone conversations, media releases with local and state elected officials, chambers-of-commerce, business people and various educational groups.

III. **Entrepreneurial Strategies**

Sanger and Levin (1992:108) stress that entrepreneurs are willing to search throughout the environment for any approach suited to their objectives. Policy entrepreneurs, such as our county superintendent, seem to be more interested in getting other actors to "buy in" to policy ideas designed to bring about a more dynamic policy change (Interview, Pulliam). As such, they are not content to work within institutional arrangements that exist. They are seen as the brokers of ideas (Eyestone, 1978; Smith, 1991). By contrast, the literature on political entrepreneurs has usually studied the areas of leadership and organization. Here, entrepreneurial activities are those which bring about dynamic political change.

Riker (1986) has studied the general patterns of strategies used by political entrepreneurs. Both Riker (1986) and Schneider and Teske (1992) believe that there is an identifiable group of entrepreneurial actors in society at any given time. These political entrepreneurs seem to appear in places where a pre-existing need for some type of dynamic change exists. The relevance of conducive environmental conditions may enhance the study of policy networks and political communities. Kingdon (1984) lists a number of reasons why policy entrepreneurs may seek change:(1) They sense there is a problem; (2) They want to promote their personal interests (i.e., keeping their jobs, getting a promotion, promoting values they care about); (3) They seek membership in a policy community.

In this particular case, the perceived problem or the preexisting need was a severe discrepancy in funding between county offices. The office of the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Public Instruction was receiving the lowest per capita student funding

of any county in the state of California. While holding positions of Deputy Superintendent, Associate Superintendent of Administrative Services, and Superintendent of Business within the county schools, the current superintendent had pursued several different avenues for remedying this solution -- but to no avail. However, as Superintendent, he developed access to all of the Legislators who represented the district. One, by the name of Jim Brulte, listened.

Political and policy entrepreneurs frame and reframe issues in such a way as to aid their cause. Policy entrepreneurs identify problems and reframe them to fit their context. Next, they attempt to persuade various publics of the efficacy of their solution to the problem. Both Pulliam and Brulte had some ideas in common: a desire to improve the educational system; to insure fair and equitable distribution of resources; and, to improve conditions within the county that they represented. Together, and separately, they set about to equalize the district's funding (Brulte, Interview; Pulliam, Interview).

Riker (1986) states such actors are described by fellow policy entrepreneurs as having excellent strategic minds. Both our political and policy entrepreneurs exhibit such minds (Pelini, Interview). Such policy entrepreneurs use many different resources in order to bring about desired policy changes: telephone calls, personal contacts, attendance at meetings, meeting with legislators, writing editorials for various publications, speaking publicly, arranging meetings to talk with recognized experts in the field, or distributing new research data and information. This process may take years. In fact, the current superintendent admitted to working toward obtaining additional resources since 1987.

Smith (1991:226) observed that policy entrepreneurs mobilize resources and create coalitions among diverse groups in order to achieve their goals. Kingdon (1984: 189-90) lists three other qualities necessary for the successful entrepreneur: (1) some claim to a hearing -- because of personal expertise, the right to speak on behalf of others, or a position of authority, (2) a reputation for political connections or negotiating ability; and (3) persistence. Again, both entrepreneurs possess a position of authority as they were elected by the people. They are capable of networking and finding the right political connections to enable them to realize the additional resources. And they have

demonstrated the persistence necessary to achieve top positions in their arenas, but not without political struggles often reported by the media.

IV. **Public Entrepreneurs and Coalition-Building**

In conflict situations where the weak join together to oppose a stronger adversary, the only viable solution may be coalition building. Strength through numbers as a means for garnering power has been recognized in sociology both in the classic literature (Marx, ; Simmel, 1950) and in more recent work (Caplow, 1956; Emerson, 1962; Blau, 1964; Bacharach and Lawler, 1980). Although collective effort may be the best alternative for gaining power, the building of a successful coalition may be extremely difficult. Those who possess power usually possess the resources necessary to maintain it. The less powerful individuals may be in direct competition with one another for resources controlled by those in power. Such competition for scarce resources would not be conducive to coalition-building. Situations requiring consensus could become problematic when mobilization of a group effort is required.

The first sociologist to explicitly analyze coalition-building as a power process was Caplow (1956). Lawler (1956) and Lawler and Thompson (1978) have analyzed the difficulties involved when mobilizing coalitions. Since Marx, conflict theorists have assumed that coalitions come about within groups when subordinates realize that they have interests in common that differ from those of the superordinate. Once they realize this, they will coalesce into a solidarity group that makes a bid for power. Therefore, intergroup conflict is seem as the basis for building coalitions. Researchers in social psychology (Sherif and Sherif, 1953) have provided evidence that an external threat will solidify a group which already exists. However, it has yet to be demonstrated that conflict will create a coalition in the first place. It is our belief that the study of coalitions which came about as a result of the Proposition 174 will prove that an outside threat can, and does, create coalitions among divergent groups. The outside threat of diminished economic survival was the inspiration for the coalition formation of disparate groups with vested interests in maintaining the status quo.

Public entrepreneurs endeavor to hold either elected or appointed offices from which they attempt to influence and redirect local policies and politics by using the powers of that office. However, entrepreneurial success is based upon their ability to resolve existing and challenging collective action problems. Building coalitions of active and informed citizens who favor the proposed changes which will move to solve such collective action problems is an effective means of accomplishing the goal. However, the public entrepreneur needs to be aware that citizens who form these coalitions of support for local entrepreneurs usually have their own incentives for becoming informed and active in local politics.

Private and public entrepreneurs possess the abilities to perceive opportunities, pursue risk-taking activities, and mobilize resources (coordinate the actions of other people) necessary to achieve their goals. The difference is that private entrepreneurs are able to work alone whereas public entrepreneurs must deal with the rules and regulations of bureaucracies and institutions. In order to achieve success, the public entrepreneur must be particularly adept at building coalitions supportive of his endeavors. (PE p. 215) Innovative entrepreneurs, like innovative politicians, will employ the same political strategies to motivate their constituents: arbitrage, heresthetics, rhetoric and inspirational leadership.(p.215) Entrepreneurs may change public opinion within existing policy space through rhetoric or may redefine entire policy dimensions using heresthetics (Riker,1990). Entrepreneurs may either respond to the demand for change or stimulate it. (218). Schneider and Teske (1992) argue that the building and maintaining of a political coalition is the best method for solving a collective action problem and successfully implementing policy change.

D. The Formation of an Action Coalition:

I. The Impetus

In November of 1993, the school choice initiative appeared on the ballot, asking the residents of the state if they wanted to institute a voucher system for the financing of education in California. A coalition of educational forces, financed by over $10 million from the California Teachers Association's coffers, joined together to fight the battle against

Proposition 174. Victorious, the coalition broke up after the election, but the lingering taste of the entire experience made some educational administrators nervous.

Lou Pelini, Director of Planning and Development at San Bernardino County School Superintendent's Office (SBCSS), commented: Barry (Pulliam) specifically felt that we ought to recognize Proposition 174 as symptomatic of a concern if not a discontent, and that (County Schools) ought to respond to that. And the time to do that was when it was fresh in everyone's mind."

In San Bernardino County, the office of the County Superintendent plays an active role as a service agency to the 33 school districts in the county. It provides payroll services, computer training, professional development for staff and teachers, and many other support services for its districts. The County Superintendent, Dr. Barry Pulliam, regularly meets with the district superintendents to discuss issues in education and the needs of the districts in serving their students.

Dr. Pulliam and his staff moved immediately to survey his district administrators and superintendents on Proposition 174. Entitling it "The Wake-Up Call" survey, administrators were asked if they perceived the voucher initiative as "a wake-up call" and, if so, how aggressively should they , as administrators, respond. Overwhelmingly, all agreed that the initiative had been a real threat that should be responded to and that administrators, teachers and parents needed to be involved in developing the response.

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Using the November 1992 district superintendents's meeting as a starting point for dialogue over Proposition 174 and its meaning, Dr. Pullium and his staff began a process that was to lead to what I now known as the "Community Coalition--Responding to the Needs of Public Education." From the seeds planted in the November meeting of

superintendents, the Community Coalition has grown into a cooperative partnership of schools, teachers, parents, businesses and government agencies now implementing several projects to meet its goal of building better schools.

Riker (1986) states that the institutional equilibrium is attacked though agenda control, strategic action and the introduction of new policy to the situation. Having once obtained the scarce resources, these were the exact steps taken by our superintendent.

II. The Community Coalition Timeline

Superintendent task forces were formed to find a structured approach for dealing with the issues brought out by the initiative and to begin organizing a partnership of schools, parents, and the community. By mid-May of 1994, the first public meeting of the "Community Coalition" was held to announce the efforts of the coalition and invite public comment.

In the summer of 1994, at the scheduled retreat for the superintendents of the county, members of the teachers union, the service union, and the parents' association were invited to attend. Small break-out groups with representatives from these varied interests discussed the issue areas to be addressed by the coalition and make their recommendations to the superintendents.

Public meetings were held county wide in efforts to reach out to the community for comments on how to improve the delivery of public school services. Over two hundred volunteers participated in these meetings in order to produce the final 51 recommendations by December of 1994. Nine thousand copies of these recommendations were distributed in an effort to garner further public reactions. Public meetings were held and a survey was distributed which asked the general public for specific comments on the recommendations.

In March of 1995, the Community Coalition task forces reconvened to review and respond to the public survey results, the public and administrator comments. A final report was issued moving the coalition forward and developing strategies for change. The four general task forces were modified to become six theme areas: basic skills, school safety,

school-to-career, assessment, technology and public information.

Moving from the strategy to the project development stage, the county office used May and June of 1995 to invite the 33 districts to evaluate the coalition's efforts and to solicit their interest in participating in the six theme areas. Once the districts make their commitments to participate and to choose those areas that they intended to commit their own resources to, the summer became dedicated to developing schemes for action in the six areas.

Theme 1: Early Literacy

The Early Literacy Training project was implemented first, responding to what the data clearly shoed to be the biggest concern on the part of everyone who participated. Resources would go first to teaching the basic skills – teaching kids to read and to develop their vocabulary and grammar skills by the 3rd grade.

Diagnosing student needs meant training teachers to recognize and asses those needs. This training project includes 93 elementary schools (nearly one-third of the entire county's elementary schools) and works on providing a highly structured reading program in those schools. Starting with just over 1000 teachers, the three year project is designed to impact over 30,000 students.

Patti DiPaulo is one of the training teachers on assignment to the districts. After being in education for 28 years, she comments that the project is well-thought out and is different than prior projects usually foisted on teachers. This project comes with support for the teachers. Sharing information among involved teachers as well as providing help to those implementing the project are the keys to this project's success. (DiPaulo, 1995).

Theme 2: Focus on the Future

The School-to-Career theme area quickly became "Focus on the Future" in order to broaden its appeal to parents and the business community. Thirteen high schools have begun a project to link students to the businesses in the community who want to apprentice students. School-within-a-school programs are being developed with the help of interested businesses and teachers who are being sent on assignment to work in the

local business community to increase their experience and update their skills. Students are participating in "pathways" that have been developed for these efforts. The colleges and universities in the area are participating as well to further link the academic experience with the business experience.

Theme 3: Instructional Technology Development Consortium

In the areas of technology, an Instructional Technology Development Consortium has been created with 22 of the 33 districts participating. The business community has joined with the schools to link business, government and school facilities together on a network that will provide Internet access to all the offices and schools. The ITDC is also providing training to teachers on assignment in the development of the use of technology in the classroom and its integration into everyday curriculum.

Theme 4: Safety

Much progress has been made in the safety theme area. First, a county wide safety center has been developed on the campus of the sheriff's academy. Campus security, proctors and aides are being trained on prevention and intervention. The California Teachers' Association is developing a safety project that provides training for teachers. Their plan is to provide safety training for every teacher in the county. (Rich Laabs, 1995). A partnership of law enforcement agencies and the district attorney's office in the county has been formed called LEEP-Law Enforcement in Education Partnership. The partnership is working toward developing a consistent message for students and mutually working together to enhance safety in the community as well as the schools.

Finally, in the high-need communities, the schools are spearheading a mobilization of business and parents to increase safety in the community. Rather than focusing only on school safety, a larger effort to increase the overall safety of the entire community is being attempted. These efforts are predicated on the findings of law enforcement that without safe communities you cannot have safe schools.

Theme 5: Assessment

In the theme area of assessment, efforts are directed in engaging parents, students and teachers in the assessment process. Work is centered around developing standards for accountability in the schools that relate to the community's values and needs. Endeavors also aim at developing the link between assessment and instruction--using the results of assessment to inform and modify instruction.

Theme 6: Public Information

In the theme area of public information, the participants are developing ways of involving the community in the education process. Information is disseminated on the coalition's efforts and public meetings to inform all who are interested in the education of the youth are held to increase the accountability of schools to their communities. Videos, slide presentations and printed materials on the progress of the Community Coalition and the involvement of schools are produced and used in presentations al over the count. Plans are being finalized to present the coalition's progress to California's educational establishment to further increase the public's awareness of the successes in the San Bernardino County Schools.

E. Conclusion

Efforts of the Community Coalition are on-going. Additional districts and schools are joining to implement the projects developed by the Coalition in their own schools. Development of more projects are planned in the different theme areas and extension of professional development to more teachers in the various theme areas is planned.

The coalition continues to move from planning through action and evaluation to replanning while involving students, teachers, administrators, and parents. There have been problems to deal with at every stage of the development of this coalition. As the threat of economic deprivation which Proposition 174 could have wrought begins to dim, certain individuals may feel less inclined to continue to participate at their highest possible levels of achievement. Hechter (1983) points this out in his discussions of the "free rider" problem, which other conflict theorists failed to note. This problem originates at the point

where individuals make rational decisions to enjoy the rewards of the collective effort without paying the costs (Olson, 1965). Mancur Olson (1965) states that the solution to the "free rider" problem is the offering of selective incentives or inducements. As the assessment results begin to indicate what success levels are being achieved and by whom, rewards will be acknowledged through the public information pieces.

The Community Coalition came into existence as a direct result of the statewide coalition which coalesced in an effort to defeat Proposition 174. Many of the same citizens who defended public education were able to turn their focus and efforts toward improvement of that same system. They have achieved some remarkable results in a relatively short timeframe as a result of their dedication. Today the coalition is moving towards the evaluation, assessment, and improvement of many projects begun because of concerns raised by an initiative which eventually failed at the polls. The initiative known as Proposition 174 brought about statewide legislation which currently enables parents to move their students within or between any school districts in the state. It brought together many groups of citizens who had never worked together before in an effort to improve the current educational system. It has focused the attention of public administrators and elected officials on the concerns of their constituents. It brought about the formation of The San Bernardino Community Coalition. The initiative process has been employed successfully in California for creating policy reflective of citizens wishes. Apparently that works to some extent even when the initiative fails because of the movement created and the public entrepreneurs who are able to sense that movment and take advantage of it!

The county superintendent remains focused on the improvement of the educational delivery systems and the impact that will have upon the county. Dr. Pulliam recently commented, "We are ready to move from thoughts into action... Part of this relates to the word 'partnerships.' If, in fact, we don't work collectively, as a society, on behalf of children, then, in essence, our tomorrows are seriously in jeopardy."

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